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Letter dated 20 November 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement on the "referendum" and the "presidential elections" in South Ossetia, Georgia, on 12 November 2006, issued on 13 November 2006 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kirsti **Lintonen**
Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 20 November 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English, French and Spanish]

Statement on the "referendum" and the "presidential elections" in South Ossetia, Georgia, on 12 November 2006, issued on 13 November 2006 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union

The European Union is aware that a "referendum" and "presidential elections" have taken place in the South Ossetian region of Georgia on 12 November 2006. The "referendum" contradicts Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. The European Union considers that the situation in South Ossetia did not allow for a free expression of the popular will. Recalling its statement at the Permanent Council of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe on 9 November, the European Union reiterates that it does not recognize the "referendum" or its outcome. The same applies to the "presidential elections" in South Ossetia, Georgia.

The European Union fully supports Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. The European Union considers that the referendum and the elections did not contribute to efforts for peaceful conflict resolution. It calls on all parties to the conflict to strictly respect existing agreements and to return immediately to the negotiating table in order to work towards a speedy and transparent solution of the South Ossetian conflict.

The acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries Croatia,* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* and Turkey, the countries of the stabilization and association process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Moldova and Ukraine, align themselves with this statement.

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the stabilization and association process.